

42nd ANNUAL *Plymouth* ICE FESTIVAL

FEBRUARY
2-4, 2024



OFFICIAL FESTIVAL PROGRAM

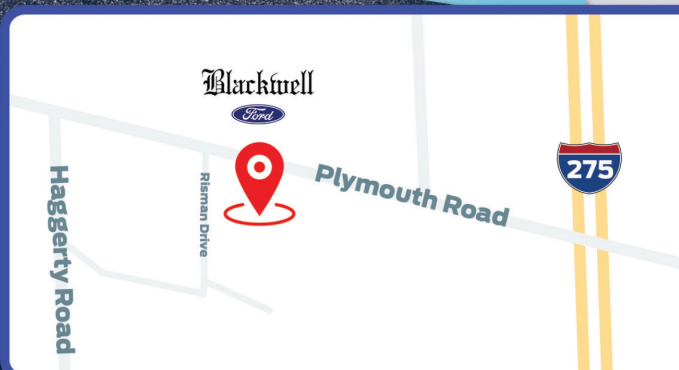
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Michigan First Credit Union is proud to serve as the presenting sponsor for the 2024 Plymouth Ice Festival.

As members of the Plymouth business community, we wanted to show our support for downtown Plymouth and help take this amazing event to new heights. As an organization, we feel deeply aligned with the Plymouth Ice Festival's commitment to community. We are proud to support this event while making even more memories in downtown Plymouth!

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Pistons, you can expect to see large hockey and basketball-themed ice carvings and opportunities for attendees to win sports merchandise and game tickets.

We would like to thank the other participating sponsors and the city of Plymouth for keeping the Ice Festival traditions alive and supporting local businesses and the mission of providing winter fun for families. We can't wait to be a part of the festival's growth over the next few years and hope everyone enjoys the spectacular ice sculptures and exciting lineup of events.

Founded in 1926, Michigan First Credit Union delivers world-class

See **Sponsors**, page 4



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Sponsor from page 3

service to more than 168,000 members at 30 branches throughout Michigan. We actively provide one-on-one banking experiences and access to financial guidance, financial education, and lending services to help our members improve their overall financial health. Above and beyond the services we offer, we seek to positively transform our members' lives in many ways.

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Crowd favorites return to 42nd Ice Festival

The 2024 Plymouth Ice Festival, presented by Michigan First Credit Union, will transform downtown Plymouth into a winter wonderland Feb. 2, 3 and 4. This year, Michigan First Credit Union will be the presenting sponsor of the event which annually draws nearly 20,000 visitors into downtown Plymouth.

Highlights of the event this year will, as always, feature spectacular ice sculptures. Producer James Gietzen of JAG Entertainment said smaller sculptures will be displayed at local businesses while the larger artworks will be installed at Kellogg Park. There will be more than 60 sculptures on exhibit this year, he said.

Gietzen said he expects the Tubing

*The weather is
always the
biggest factor.*

Run to be one of the most popular events at the festival along with the Family Petting Zoo. Gietzen said the Tubing Run is back by popular demand and is sure to attract crowds while the Petting Zoo is always one of the most popular attractions at the event.

Gietzen said he expects a record crowd at the 42nd Plymouth Ice Festival

this year unless Mother Nature doesn't cooperate. "The weather is always the biggest factor," Gietzen said. "We don't want it to be too cold but we don't want rain or warmer temperatures either." Warmer temperatures mean melting ice which can ruin the sculptures, he noted.

Gietzen and his company have had years of experience with the festival and unpredictable weather. He and his crew have had to find awnings to shield the sculptures from unexpected rain and have had to watch as the artwork melted during unseasonably warm temperatures. Those were the exceptions, Gietzen said. "The festival gives people

See **Favorites**, page 6



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Favorites from page 5

and families something fun to do during the colder weather. People can get out, enjoy the festival activities and see the artists' work. It really is a good time for everybody," he said.

Again this year, the Ice Throne in Kellogg Park will be the setting for hundreds of family photos, Gietzen said. Families have made the annual photo at the ice carving a tradition and return every year, he added.

As always, the festival will feature a place to sit and warm up at the Hot Spot located in The Gathering across from Kellogg Park. Each year, Ehlers Heating and Cooling provides the warmth at the site which features local vendors, businesses, product demonstrations, a sitting area to allow for a respite from sculpture



James Gietzen

viewing. The Hot Spot is open during official hours of the festival, Gietzen said, and is always popular.

Festival visitors usually can't resist the fresh roasted almonds, elephant ears and mini donuts available at the food

booths and wagons. The event also features a Polish food booth inside the Hotspot warming station. In addition, all the restaurants in the downtown area will be offering some of their best menu items during the festival.

The popular Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Bingo game will also return this year. Visitors can stop in participating businesses and collect enough stickers to get a bingo on their playing card which then makes them eligible for a special prize from The Plymouth DDA.

This year, the Plymouth Ice Festival is set for 5 until 10 p.m. Friday, Feb. 2, from 10 a.m. until 10 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 3 and from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 4.

For more information, visit www.plymouthicefest.com or on social media @PlymouthIceFestival.

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Living a dream

Professional ice carver achieves lifelong goal

By Carol Souchock — Special Writer

Ice Carver Ben Goebel is living out his childhood dream as one of the main artists creating the ice sculptures at the Plymouth Ice Festival. As a child he visited the festival with his parents and wondered how the carvers created the amazing sculptures and asked himself is carving something I can do? Years later, as a culinary arts student at Oakland Community College, he was inspired to participate in a student competition at the Plymouth Ice Festival. The following year he was undefeated in every completion and

won back to back national championships while attending Oakland Community College. This college hobby started him off on his culinary arts career and he enjoys sharing his skills with youth at the festival who might ask themselves the same questions. He will present a live carving demonstration on Saturday in Kellogg Park during which he will make small pieces to give out to the youth attending. This year he will be carving several pieces at the festival including one of Barbie which is



See **Carver**, page 8

Ben Goebel

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Carver from page 7

expected to be a crowd favorite.

The Plymouth Ice Festival is a premiere event in the ice carving world and Goebel shared that this event holds a special place in his heart. When he travels around the Midwest to other events he said he is often asked if he participates in the Plymouth festival. He said he is proud to be able to answer yes and thanks James Gietzen, of JAG Entertainment, who produces the festival, for his ongoing support. This festival is a family affair as Goebel's two children will be at the festival this year to help him with his work.

During the last several years Goebel has been able to work full-time as a carver and said he is thrilled to be able



to support his family with his skill. December to March is the ice festival season when he participates in events throughout the Midwest. During the rest of the year he creates sculptures

for private events like weddings and parties. Goebel formed his company Top Shelf Ice and works out of his Whitmore Lake studio. To learn more about Goebel's work, which is hand

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carved, visit <https://www.topshelfice.net/> or visit his Instagram account.

The ice carving world in Michigan is a small close community where the artists get to know each other and help each other, Goebel explained. There are about 10 artists who create all of the sculptures in the current Plymouth Ice Festival and the work takes place over several days leading up to the festival. Each block of ice weighs 300 to 350 pounds. Several blocks are staked and frozen together to create the large sculptures. Many pieces are made of five or so blocks but others like the Plymouth Community Chamber sculpture, which will be a prehistoric dinosaur, require 15 or so blocks. All pieces are carved on-site.



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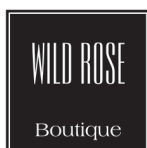
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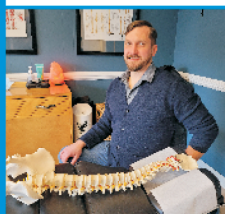


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Furry, 4-footed friends return to Plymouth

Some of the most popular visitors to downtown Plymouth during the Ice Festival each year never really have to worry about the weather. They have a staff for that.

Again this year, Carousel Acres will bring animals to the festival in a small petting zoo designed to entertain crowds with a hands-on visit with the various animals. This year, there will also be pony rides available while the petting zoo is open from 11 a.m. until 5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

Visitors will see horses, donkeys, goats, sheep, alpaca and even a baby calf this year, organizers said, although the weather will determine exactly which animals will join the visit. The



animals, all domesticated and dedicated crowd pleasers will be transported

to the festival from their South Lyon farm home by members of the Iacobelli family who have been providing a bit of nature into city events for more than 25 years.

The animals are all accustomed to being touched and petted and seem to enjoy the multiple visits to community events they make each year, according to Tammy Iacobelli, owner of Carousel Farms. She noted that all the animals have been raised on the farm and the family members who care for them understand the animals' temperaments and nature.

The Petting Zoo and pony rides are sponsored by Michigan First Credit Union.



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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

The Plymouth Ice Festival presented by Michigan First Credit Union is a world-class event which historically brings 20,000 visitors to downtown Plymouth. This is the 42nd year of the family-friendly event which offers outdoor entertainment and first-hand look at the Plymouth community.

2024 PLYMOUTH ICE FESTIVAL OFFICIAL HOURS OF OPERATION:

Friday, Feb. 2	5 p.m. until 10 p.m.
Saturday, Feb. 3	10 a.m. until 10 p.m.
Sunday, Feb..4	10 a.m. until 6 p.m.

Sculptures are available for viewing 24 hours a day and will remain standing after the event - weather permitting.



ICE SCULPTURES

The stars of the event are the Ice Carvings which line the sidewalks throughout downtown Plymouth. Each work of art begins with a 350 pound block of ice that world-renown ice carvers turn into awe-inspiring sculptures. This year, the carvers have created more than 60 carvings to be displayed during the event.

ICE FESTIVAL BINGO

Presented by Thrivent

Visitors can collect enough stickers at local downtown shops and restaurants to make a bingo which will enter their card in a prize drawing. Prizes will be awarded by the Plymouth Downtown Development Authority (DDA). Bingo cards will be available at participating merchants the week leading up to the ice festival.

THE HOT SPOT

Heated By Ehlers Heating & Air Conditioning
Warm up in style at the Hot Spot, heated by Ehlers Heating and Air Conditioning. Located under The Gathering directly across from Kellogg Park. The Hot Spot features local vendors, businesses, product demonstrations, a comfortable sitting area and most importantly, lots of heat. The Hot Spot will be open during official open hours of the Plymouth Ice Festival.

DOWNTOWN PLYMOUTH

Downtown Plymouth features eclectic gathering of shops, apparel stores, eateries, salons and

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spas, many of which will be open with special features during the Ice Festival. Unique gifts, wonderful meals, special home goods and stylish fashions can all be found downtown. Merchant and shop hours will vary.

ICE THRONE

Presented by Varsity Automotive Group
For years, this unique ice carving has provided the perfect setting for family photographs. Festival guests will feel like "Ice Festival Royalty" as they take a seat atop the Ice Throne. This activity has been a tradition for many families, as they return for that special picture every year.



TUBING RUN

Back by popular demand. Visitors can prepare for an avalanche of excitement at The Plymouth Ice Festival tubing run. The attraction features more than 100 feet of tubing excitement and fun for the whole family.

The Tubing Run will be open from 6 until 9 p.m. Friday, Feb. 2; from 11 a.m. until 9 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 3 and from 11 a.m. until 5 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 4.

FAMILY PETTING ZOO

Presented by Michigan First Credit Union
Located next to the Ice Playground, Carousel Acres will be offering a hands-on experience with horses, donkeys, goats, sheep, alpaca and even a baby calf. This popular activity attracts large crowds every year including children and animal lovers of all ages. This year, the Petting Zoo will also feature pony rides.
Petting Zoo hours this year are from 11 a.m. until 5 p.m. on both Saturday and Sunday.

Movies at the Penn Theater

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PARTY LOT AND ICE BAR

Located at EG. Nicks

The Ice Bar presented by Pink Whitney will be open all three days of the Ice Festival. Ava James and the Rumors will entertain in the heated tent in the Forest Avenue restaurant rear parking lot at 8 p.m. Friday.

On Saturday, Power Play Detroit will perform from 8 p.m. until midnight.

The \$5 cover charge at the tent is donated to the local Vietnam Veterans group.

Official Warming Stations of The Plymouth Ice Festival.

Ehlers heating and cooling "Hot Spot" Located Next the Penn Theater 790 Penniman Ave. Food, drinks, face painting, vendors and rest room facilities are available during all regular festival hours.

Plymouth Community United Way. 960 W. Ann Arbor Tail Suite 2

Hot beverages and snacks will be available at this location from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. Saturday.

Chill out at festival, thrill at library

By Heather Pachero
Plymouth District Library

Everyone who has visited the Ice Festival in Plymouth knows what a thrill it is to see the beautiful sculptures and imagine in disbelief how the intricate details were made by a powerful chainsaw. It's also a thrill to be together out in the chilly weather exploring the town and the activities. There's another less-talked-about thrill that comes with Ice Fest though, and that's the thrill of coming back indoors after all the winter fun to warm up. Plymouth District Library invites ice fest visitors to stop by the library while you are downtown to

warm up, pick up a book or a movie, or maybe borrow a game from our all-ages board game collection - a perfect end to a fun day.

While there, the library invites you to visit their Lab on the upper floor to pick up a 3D wooden snowflake, laser cut on a Glowforge. The snowflakes can be decorated with paint, stain, or markers, or enjoyed in their raw wood form. They will be available one-person while supplies last.

There is so much new and exciting going on at the library, and the tools in the lab are at the top of the list. In addition to the Glowforge laser engraver and cutter, the library also



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now offers a sublimation printer patrons can use to print designs on mugs, tumblers and more. There's a Cricut cutter that cuts digital designs from a wide range of materials including paper, cardboard, vinyl and even plastic to make stencils for etching glass. There's a heat press for printing designs on shirts, aprons, bags and



other fabrics, as well as a sewing machine, serger and new embroidery machine. Class opportunities are slowly growing and the library invites you to sign up on the event calendar at plymouthlibrary.org or just come during open lab hours to explore your own maker ideas.

If outdoor fun is your thing, there

are a number of items in the Library of Things that you may want to check out including a bird watching kit, a metal detector, hiking poles, telescopes and a GoPro camera that is just the tool to capture your winter sports adventure footage. New items are being added all the time so keep an eye on the e-Newsletter for new additions.

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Check out our event calendar for great programs to help you beat the winter blues!



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Plus pick up a tabletop snowflake, laser cut in our lab!

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Cold drinks, hot music

Party Lot, Ice Bar have become festival traditions

Some of the 'hottest' attractions at the annual Plymouth Ice Festival take place on Forest Street at E.G. Nick's restaurant.

All weekend, visitors can get a "cold one" at the traditional Ice Bar located on the newly renovated patio at the restaurant. On Friday and Saturday, the huge, heated tent in the rear parking lot draws large crowds to hear some of the hottest bands in the area entertain from 8 p.m. until midnight.

The bar and Party Lot have become a mainstay of the festival. The ice bar this year is sponsored by Pink Whitney,

It's just a lot of fun.

*The carvers do
a fantastic job*

explained E.G. Nick's owners Frank Agostini and Tony Belli, and will be open all three days of the festival.

"It just wouldn't be the festival without it," they agreed.

About a decade ago, professional carvers wielding chisels, hair dryers and various saws and picks created the first ice bar outside the restaurant at 500 Forest St. where the bravest, customers can sit down to order a cocktail. The tradition has continued and customers return year after year to enjoy the novelty at the bar.

"It's just a lot of fun," Agostini said. "The carvers do a fantastic job and we enjoy having the bar here. Especially this year with our recent remodeling of the patio area."

The Party Lot will also be open



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Friday and Saturday nights featuring live entertainment along with beer and wine service in the tent, erected in the rear parking lot. This year, Ava James and the Rumors will entertain on Friday night and Power Play Detroit will take to the stage on Saturday at 8 p.m. Agostini said the tent usually opens about an hour before the bands start.

The Party Lot has become an entertainment destination for adult festival visitors who enjoy the music and the atmosphere. In addition, the \$5 cover charge is donated to the Plymouth Vietnam Veterans organization and has become one of the group's largest fundraisers.

The veterans will be on hand during both evenings, checking identifications and applying wristbands for guests.



People never hesitate to pay the cover charge, Agostini said, as the \$5 is going to such a worthwhile cause.

"I've seen folks put \$20 and \$50 bills in the jar, just because we owe these guys so much for their service. This

helps them out and we're glad to do it," Agostini said.

The Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 528 of Plymouth Canton is

See **E.G. Nick's**, page 18



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E.G. Nick's from page 17

nationally chartered and is dedicated to supporting issues important to Vietnam veterans and their families

"We always get a huge crowd," Agostini said. "The bands this year are terrific. We were lucky to get Ava James and the Rumors for Friday; and Power Play Detroit is a real crowd favorite. They've been here several times and the crowd loves them. They have a huge following," he added.

The Ice Festival is one of Agostini and Belli's favorite community events, they agreed.

"This is just a great time and a lot of fun at a time of year when we need a little entertainment,"

Agostini said. "We probably enjoy it as much as the crowds do."





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42ND ANNUAL *Plymouth* ICE FESTIVAL FEBRUARY 2-4, 2024

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Popular merchant game returns to 2024 festival

The popular Ice Festival Bingo game will return to the event this year offering another great reason to visit the event.

The game, sponsored by Thrivent, is an effort to show visitors the variety and of the local businesses in downtown Plymouth. Organizers said visitors are often surprised by the unique shops and merchants Plymouth offers. To play, visitors simply need to collect a sticker at each of the participating businesses, add it to the Bingo card and drop the entry into the Thrivent booth during Festival hours..

Entries which have filled a vertical,

”
*Entries will be entered
 into a random
 drawing for prizes.*

horizontal or diagonal line on the Bingo card will be entered into a random drawing for one of 20 Bingo prizes of \$50 along with the grand prize of more than \$200. The grand prize will be drawn from cards which contain all the merchant stickers, organizers said. Winners will be notified by email just in time for

Valentines Day.

Empty Bingo cards are available at locations throughout downtown Plymouth and are posted on Downtown Development Authority website. Click on the image of the Bingo card for a printable entry form. All of the participating businesses will not be open during the entirety of the Plymouth Ice Festival. Players should confirm the hours of operation during the festival if seeking a sticker from a particular business. Participating merchants have been instructed to leave stickers outside their doorways if closed during the event.



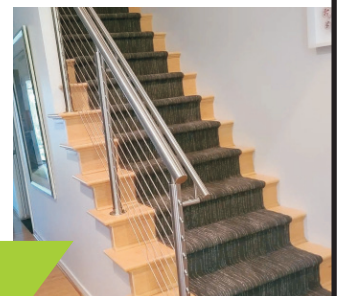
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